



Intercultural Communication Theory A Theoretical Analysis of Islamic Da'wah in a Multicultural Context

Hafniati*

Universitas Ibn Khaldun Bogor
INDONESIA

Muhktar Amiruddin Ahmad

STAI Al Washliyah Banda Aceh
INDONESIA

*** Corresponding author:**

Hafniati, Universitas Ibn Khaldun Bogor, INDONESIA ✉ hafniati@uika-bogor.ac.id

Article Info

Article history:

Received: September 02, 2026

Revised: September 20, 2026

Accepted: October 06, 2026

Keywords:

Intercultural Communication;
Islamic Da'wah;
Multicultural Society;
Cultural Adaptation;
Social Solidarity

Abstract

Background: This study examines intercultural communication theory in relation to Islamic da'wah within the context of multicultural societies. Indonesia, as a heterogeneous nation characterized by ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity, presents complex communication dynamics that may generate barriers, misperceptions, and conflicts.

Aims: Culture functions as a framework that shapes how individuals communicate, while Islamic da'wah is understood as a communicative process that appeals to human nature through wisdom and compassion.

Methods: This theoretical analysis highlights the concepts of assimilation, acculturation, adaptation, and social solidarity as key foundations for understanding cross-cultural interaction.

Results: Islamic da'wah is positioned as a communicative medium capable of bridging differences, reducing uncertainty, and strengthening social solidarity.

Conclusion: By integrating perspectives from communication studies, anthropology, and Islamic da'wah, this study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of intercultural communication in plural societies, as well as to enrich academic discourse on the relationship between religion, culture, and communication.

To cite this article: Hafniati & Ahmad, M, A. (2026). Intercultural Communication Theory A Theoretical Analysis of Islamic Da'wah in a Multicultural Context. *Journal of Digital Scholarship in Archives and Information*, 2(2), 31-43. <https://doi.org/10.58723/jdsai.v2i2.249>

This article is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) ©202x by author/s

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is widely recognized as a heterogeneous society characterized by diversity in ethnicity, religion, language, and customs. This diversity is evident in everyday interactions and gives rise to complex dynamics of intercultural communication. Intercultural communication becomes particularly important because each individual brings a distinct cultural background, increasing the potential for communication barriers when differences are pronounced (Chen & Starosta, 1996; Haddad, 2024). This diversity produces complex dynamics of intercultural communication, as individuals bring distinct cultural backgrounds that influence meaning-making and interaction (Samovar et al., 2010). Culture functions as a framework that shapes how humans communicate, whether through language, traditions, or prevailing social norms (Judaa & Alshbeekat, 2024).

In the Islamic context, communication has a broader meaning as it is closely associated with da'wah, namely the call to invite humanity toward truth through wisdom and heartfelt persuasion. Communication is closely associated with da'wah, understood as an invitation to truth conducted with wisdom and moral persuasion. Da'wah is not merely ritualistic but represents a communicative process that engages human fitrah and therefore requires cultural sensitivity and social awareness (Mahfudz, 1952). Consequently, it requires skills, expertise, and a deep understanding of the social structures of the communities being addressed. In Islam, Communication scholars emphasize that intercultural communication includes interactions across religion, subculture, gender, and dominant-minority cultural relations, all of which require adaptability and uncertainty reduction (Kazanskaia & Kazanskaia, 2025; Maesurah et al., 2025).

Communication scholars such as DeVito and Samovar emphasize that intercultural communication encompasses interactions across religious boundaries, subcultures, gender differences, as well as between dominant and minority cultures (Hikmah & Suharno, 2022; Sulistyani et al., 2021). Such communication requires sensitivity, adaptability, and the ability to reduce uncertainty in order to function effectively. In practice, however, cultural differences often lead to misperceptions, misunderstandings, and even conflict. Therefore, intercultural communication necessitates clear principles to bridge cultural differences (Aleksandrova et al., 2024; Sylvia et al., 2010).

Within plural societies, intercultural communication processes are inseparable from social theories such as assimilation, acculturation, adaptation, and solidarity. Assimilation and acculturation illustrate how cultures merge or interact with one another, while adaptation highlights the capacity to adjust to new social environments (Adams & Johnson, 2020; Grover et al., 2018). Social solidarity, as conceptualized by Durkheim, serves as a crucial foundation for maintaining social cohesion, as relationships between individuals and groups are grounded in shared moral values and emotional experiences (Kollai, 2023; Nurziana & Firdaus, 2026).

Although intercultural communication has been extensively discussed by scholars, existing studies tend to focus primarily on theoretical aspects such as assimilation, acculturation, adaptation, and social solidarity without deeply linking them to the practice of Islamic da'wah in the context of Indonesia's ethnic pluralism (Kollai, 2023; Nurziana & Firdaus, 2026). Most studies emphasize general barriers to intercultural communication, while relatively few examine how Islamic da'wah, as a form of cross-cultural communication, can bridge differences, reduce uncertainty, and foster social solidarity within multicultural Muslim societies (Ahmadi & Gunarti, 2024). This gap highlights the need to integrate intercultural communication theory, anthropology, and Islamic da'wah in order to better understand the dynamics of heterogeneous societies and contribute to both theoretical development and practical applications of intercultural communication in Indonesia (Hamid et al., 2026; Setiawan, 2025).

METHOD

Type of Research

This study uses a qualitative approach through theoretical analysis. Rather than gathering empirical data, it explores relevant concepts, theories, and previous studies concerning intercultural communication, anthropology, and Islamic da'wah. The study therefore employs a library research approach, focusing on understanding and examining ideas and conceptual perspectives relevant to the topic. Data Sources

1. Primary sources: Foundational literature on intercultural communication theory (e.g., works by DeVito, Samovar, Porter, and Hall), social theory (Durkheim, Weber, Ritzer), and classical Islamic da'wah texts (the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical da'wah works such as Hidayah al-Mursyidin by Ali Mahfudz).
2. Secondary sources: Journal articles, books, and previous studies addressing Indonesian ethnic pluralism, social integration, and da'wah practices in multicultural societies.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through documentation studies, including academic books on communication, anthropology, and da'wah, relevant scholarly journal articles on intercultural communication and Islam, as well as historical and normative documents such as the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical da'wah literature.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis employed descriptive-analytical and comparative-conceptual approaches:

1. Descriptive-analytical: Elaborating key concepts (assimilation, acculturation, adaptation, social solidarity) and linking them to Islamic da'wah as a communicative process.

2. Comparative-conceptual: Comparing intercultural communication theories with Islamic da'wah principles to identify points of convergence and relevance within Indonesia's multicultural context.
3. Theoretical synthesis: Integrating perspectives from communication studies, anthropology, and Islamic da'wah into a new conceptual framework to enrich academic discourse.

Data Validity

To ensure validity, this study applies source triangulation by comparing literature from multiple disciplines (communication, anthropology, and Islamic da'wah). This approach ensures that the analysis is not biased toward a single perspective but remains holistic and interdisciplinary (Gorter & Cenoz, 2023; Meydan & Akkas, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Communication, Culture, and Islamic Da'wah in the Context of Pluralism

Communication and culture are two inseparable concepts, as intercultural communication emphasizes how culture influences message transmission and social interaction (Hall, 1959; Samovar et al., 2010). Culture functions as a framework shaping communication through language, traditions, and norms. In Islam, communication carries a broader meaning because it is synonymous with da'wah the call to invite humanity toward divine truth and guidance (Abdulsalam, 2025; Mowlana, 2013). Da'wah is not merely ritualistic but represents a communicative process that resonates with human nature, requiring skills, expertise, and an understanding of the target society's structure (Mulyana, 1998).

Anthropology, on the other hand, underscores the importance of local knowledge as a gateway to understanding social life. Every communicative practice represents culture, reflecting the values, norms, and ideas embedded within a particular community (Ramírez, 2003; Verver & Koning, 2023). Ethnic pluralism does not necessarily result in cultural uniformity; rather, it accentuates diversity in social interaction. Consequently, communication and culture are reciprocal: culture is transmitted through communication, while communication is shaped by culture (Gudykunst, 1997; Mohiuddin et al., 2016). This reciprocal relationship highlights the interconnectedness of communication studies, anthropology, and da'wah in understanding plural societies.

Edward T. Hall famously asserted that "culture is communication, and communication is culture," emphasizing their inseparability in human life (Hall, 1959). Similarly, Mulyana explains that every communicative practice represents a cultural map of complex realities, particularly in intercultural contexts where immaterial cultural elements such as language, traditions, customs, norms, moral values, ethics, beliefs, religion, and art, shape interaction and communication patterns (Mulyana, 1998). Communication and culture are closely interconnected and cannot be viewed as separate concepts. Intercultural communication is generally understood as a field that examines how cultural backgrounds influence the way people communicate and interpret messages. Thayer highlights two important functions of culture in communication. First, culture develops as a product of unique interactions among individuals over time. Second, culture serves as a collection of meanings, values, and practices that are socially transmitted and shared across generations and communities (Atran et al., 2005; Lull & Neiva, 2011).

Islamic communication is commonly associated with da'wah, which refers to the ongoing effort to invite people toward Islamic teachings and values. Da'wah has been practiced since the time of the Prophet Muhammad and continues to be carried out today. At its core, da'wah is an invitation that seeks to reach the human heart while taking into account the innate nature of human beings (fitrah). It encourages individuals to live in accordance with divine guidance. As such, da'wah is regarded as a responsibility shared by Muslims, both men and women, and may be carried out according to their respective abilities, knowledge, and areas of expertise. Finkelkraut argues that individuals have the capacity to reflect critically on their own culture. In a similar sense, Islam provides room for its

followers to engage with, examine, and reflect on cultural practices, both in response to contemporary circumstances and in considering future developments (Fakhrurrazi et al., 2023).

Shaykh Ali Mahfudz, in the book *Hidayatul al-Mursyidin* defines da'wah as follows:

حث الناس على الخير والهدى والامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر ليفوزوا بسعادة العاجل والأجل

The word *ḥaththa* (حَثَّ) means to urge, encourage, exhort, or incite. Linguistically, the verb *ḥaththa-yaḥuththu* (حَثَّ-يُحِثُّ) conveys the sense of speed, immediacy, rapid movement, or swiftness. The expression *ḥaththa khuṭāhu* (حَثَّ خُطَاهُ) means to hasten one's steps or to act in a hurried manner, while *ḥathīth* (حَثِيثٌ) denotes something done quickly or with great speed (Mahfudz, 1952).

The relationship between anthropology, communication, and development can be examined through three stages of analysis: local knowledge, action or behavior, and meaning-making. Communication and culture are inseparable, although they constitute distinct entities. Communication is the process of transmitting messages among communication actors with the aim of achieving mutual understanding. Culture, on the other hand, can be understood as the sustained patterns of behavior and meaning within a community (Leonard et al., 2009; Liddicoat, 2009). The two share an existential relationship: culture can be preserved and transmitted across generations through communication as a medium for conveying traditions and values. Conversely, the way individuals communicate is strongly influenced by the culture they embrace (Ding & Haris, 2025). Thus, communication and culture are reciprocal in nature, mutually shaping and reinforcing one another. Edward T. Hall emphasized that culture is communication and communication is culture, underscoring that both represent two inseparable dimensions of human life (Hall, 1959).

Mulyana explains that every communicative practice essentially represents culture, or more precisely, serves as a map of complex cultural realities. He further emphasizes that when discussing culture and other cultures, the focus within intercultural communication is largely related to immaterial aspects, such as language, traditions, customs, customary practices, norms, moral values, ethics, ideas, religion, art, and belief systems. These intangible cultural elements ultimately shape how individuals interact and communicate; therefore, communication cannot be separated from the cultural framework in which it is embedded (Mulyana, 1998).

Indonesia's ethnic diversity, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Batak, Minangkabau, Balinese, and Papuan communities demonstrates how communication styles vary across cultural groups in terms of language choice, speech patterns, and cultural expression. These differences reflect Indonesia's cultural richness while reinforcing the notion that communication is always culturally situated. Patterns of communication and interaction within contexts of ethnic pluralism do not necessarily result in the homogenization of cultural values. Instead, cultural differences often become more salient during intercultural encounters, particularly in situations that are perceived as unsupportive or incompatible with the normative frameworks of certain ethnic groups (Gale et al., 2021; Shimizu & Bradley, 2014). In such contexts, interaction with other cultures may reinforce cultural boundaries rather than dissolve them. Moreover, cultural values tend not to be fully integrated into the dominant or local cultural order, as sociocultural values are continuously maintained and institutionalized by each ethnic group. This process is driven by the desire to preserve cultural identity and to reaffirm collective beliefs regarding the legitimacy and validity of their own sociocultural values (Bunce, 2021; Yang et al., 2019).

Communication and culture are closely interconnected and cannot be separated, as communicative practices reflect cultural values, while culture is transmitted and maintained through communication. In the Islamic context, this relationship can be seen in the practice of da'wah, which seeks to guide people toward truth through wise, ethical, and compassionate forms of communication. From an anthropological perspective, local knowledge, traditions, and intangible cultural values provide an important foundation for social interaction, particularly within Indonesia's diverse ethnic communities. Differences in communication styles among ethnic groups reflect not only the richness of Indonesian culture but also the reciprocal relationship between communication and culture, in which each continuously shapes and reinforces the other. This

relationship is therefore essential for understanding the dynamics of communication within plural and culturally diverse societies (Eman et al., 2026; Lumampauw et al., 2021).

Integration and Differences in Intercultural Communication

Indonesia's heterogeneous society produces intercultural communication dynamics shaped by cultural frameworks that regulate how messages, meanings, and social conditions are understood. Intercultural communication is crucial because individuals bring diverse cultural backgrounds, increasing the likelihood of communication barriers when differences are significant. Scholars emphasize that intercultural communication encompasses interactions across religion, subcultures, gender, and dominant-minority cultural relations. In this context, social solidarity becomes a vital foundation for sustaining social cohesion within a multicultural society (Dharma et al., 2025; Ilya et al., 2026; Parmanasova et al., 2022).

Intercultural communication involves interaction among individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Since no two individuals are culturally identical, differences in worldview and thinking patterns often lead to communication barriers. Scholars such as DeVito and Samovar classify intercultural communication into various forms, including interreligious communication, communication among subcultures, communication between subcultures and dominant cultures, and communication across gender differences (DeVito, 2013; Samovar et al., 2010).

Intercultural communication refers to communication that takes place between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. In essence, no two individuals are exactly alike, as each person develops unique cultural characteristics that influence their worldview, perceptions, and ways of thinking. When people from significantly different cultural backgrounds interact, differences in values, beliefs, and communication styles may create greater challenges in the communication process. As a result, the likelihood and intensity of communication barriers may increase, particularly when cultural differences are not properly understood or accommodated (Samovar et al., 2010).

Various methods and theories have been proposed by scholars in formulating the concept of intercultural communication, each of which is adapted to specific social contexts and paradigms. DeVito identifies several forms of intercultural communication. First, communication between different religious groups, such as between Islam and Christianity, or between Hinduism and Islam. Second, communication among different subcultures, for example between doctors and lawyers, chefs and tailors, or servants and their employers (Menson et al., 2025; Taqiyuddin & Mohammed, 2025). Third, intercultural communication may occur between members of subcultures and those belonging to the dominant culture, such as interactions between homosexual and heterosexual individuals, people with visual impairments and those without disabilities, or colonizers and colonized communities. Fourth, it may involve communication across gender differences, particularly between men and women. Samovar identifies interpersonal interaction as one of the linguistic contexts within intercultural communication. Such interaction takes place when individuals from different cultural backgrounds communicate with one another, often requiring them to use a language other than their native language. When a native language is used in communication with speakers from another cultural background, additional consideration is needed to minimize the possibility of misunderstanding and miscommunication (Al-Tarawneh, 2024; Huang et al., 2012).

The development of culture and human life is closely interconnected. Intercultural relations give rise to a new form of interaction, namely intercultural communication. Intercultural communication refers to a form of communication in which individuals involved come from different cultural backgrounds. This type of communication generally occurs when the participants explicitly or implicitly bring diverse cultural origins into the interaction, influencing how messages are produced and interpreted (Howarth, 2011).

Discussions on intercultural communication cannot be separated from theories such as those below:

1. Assimilation

Assimilation is an advanced social process in which individuals or groups gradually reduce their differences and develop greater unity in their actions, attitudes, and ways of thinking. This

process is generally driven by shared interests, goals, and values. In a cultural context, assimilation involves the blending of different cultural elements, which may gradually lead to the diminishing of distinctive characteristics associated with the original cultures and the emergence of a new cultural pattern. Thus, assimilation can be understood as a continuous process through which individuals or groups adapt to one another, strengthen social cohesion, and develop a greater sense of commonality while maintaining interaction within a shared social environment.

2. Acculturation

Acculturation is a process through which interactions between a new culture and an indigenous culture lead to the development of cultural similarities that may eventually move toward assimilation. The changes that occur are not limited to the sociocultural system of the incoming community; rather, the indigenous culture also undergoes relative transformation as a result of continuous intercultural contact.

3. Adaptation

The term adaptation derives from the English word adaptation, which generally means adjusting to new needs and demands. A system may adapt itself to the environment, or alternatively, adjust the environment to meet its needs. Kaplan further explains that adaptation is a process that connects a cultural system with its environment (Kaplan & Manners, 2000). Meanwhile, Sanderson argues that adaptation represents a social portrait reflected in traits or dispositions that emerges as a consequence of sociocultural needs, since new sociocultural forms arise as adaptive responses. Sanderson also emphasizes that sociocultural innovation is carried out deliberately rather than randomly, as sociocultural evolution tends to occur rapidly (Sanderson, 1999). Thus, humans and their natural environment are engaged in a reciprocal relationship, commonly referred to as interaction. The strategies employed by humans in interacting with their environment are known as adaptation. Humans and cultures continuously change and vary, as does the surrounding natural environment; consequently, the patterns of interaction between humans and their environment also vary, although certain similarities may persist (Kaplan & Manners, 2000; Sanderson, 1999). Based on the above definitions, the concept of adaptation most relevant to the present study refers to a systematic process of self-adjustment by individuals to the environment they enter. In this process, the influence of other accompanying cultural systems may gradually fade and, in some cases, disappear entirely.

4. Solidarity

According to Émile Durkheim, social solidarity in society consists of two forms: mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. Mechanical solidarity views society as a living entity one that thinks and behaves confronted by social phenomena or social facts that appear to exist outside the individual. These external social facts possess coercive power over. Initially, social facts originate from individual thoughts or behaviors; however, when similar thoughts and behaviors are shared by many individuals, they evolve into collective patterns of thinking and acting. Over time, these collective patterns become social facts that are general in nature and imposed upon each individual, thereby acquiring a collective and coercive character. According to Émile Durkheim, social solidarity refers to the relationships established between individuals and groups, which are grounded in shared feelings and moral values and strengthened by common emotional experiences. In relation to societal development, Durkheim argues that societies evolve from simple forms to modern ones. One of the primary components of society that becomes central in understanding this development is the form of social solidarity, which differs significantly between traditional societies and modern societies (Durkheim & Halls, 1997).

Intercultural communication is a crucial process in plural societies such as Indonesia, as every interaction is inevitably influenced by differing cultural backgrounds. Culture functions as a

framework through which messages, meanings, and social conditions are understood, while communication serves as a medium for transmitting cultural values. Various theoretical perspectives such as assimilation, acculturation, adaptation, and social solidarity demonstrate that intercultural relations not only foster integration but also affirm differences that enrich social life ([Croucher et al., 2015](#); [Spulber & Nesterova, 2023](#)).

Functions and Principles of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication serves both personal and social functions, particularly within culturally diverse societies. At the personal level, it is expressed through individual communicative behavior and contributes to several important processes, including identity formation, social integration, knowledge acquisition, and problem-solving. At the social level, intercultural communication facilitates social surveillance, helps bridge cultural differences, supports the process of socialization, and provides opportunities for entertainment. These functions highlight that communication involves more than simply exchanging information; it is also an ongoing process of interpreting, negotiating, and constructing meaning across cultural boundaries.

1. Social Identity

The process of intercultural communication involves various forms of individual communicative behavior. Such behaviors are used to express both personal identity and social identity. These behaviors are primarily enacted through language. Language may be expressed verbally or nonverbally, and through such linguistic behaviors, both personal and social identities can be recognized for example, indicators of ethnic origin, religious affiliation, or an individual's level of education may become apparent ([Brown et al., 2005](#)).

2. Social Integration

The core concept of social integration lies in accepting unity and cohesion among individuals and groups while simultaneously acknowledging the differences inherent within their elements. One of the primary goals of communication is to create shared meaning between the communicator and the communicant. Intercultural communication inherently involves cultural differences between the communicator and the communicant. The fundamental principle in the process of intercultural message exchange is to treat others in ways that are consistent with how their own culture expects individuals to be treated ([Gudykunst, 1997](#)). Therefore, social integration can be regarded as the ultimate objective of intercultural communication.

3. Share Knowledge

Intercultural communication enhances shared knowledge because the parties involved in the interaction mutually learn about each other's cultures. Furthermore, communication also serves as a means of release or problem-solving, as it aims to find solutions to issues encountered in social interaction. Through communication, individuals are able to establish complementary relationships as well as symmetrical relationships, depending on the roles and positions of the participants involved ([Damayanti et al., 2025](#)).

4. Mutual Surveillance

Intercultural communication practices that occur between communicators and communicants from different cultural backgrounds also function as a form of mutual surveillance. In every intercultural communication process, this function is useful for informing individuals about developments within their environment. This function is predominantly carried out by mass media, which routinely disseminate information about ongoing events in society, even when such events take place within cultural contexts different from those of the audience.

5. Bridge Over Existing Differences

In the process of interpersonal communication, including intercultural communication, the communicative functions that operate between two individuals with different backgrounds serve

as a bridge over existing differences. This bridging function is realized through the exchange of messages, in which both parties continuously clarify differing interpretations until shared meaning is achieved. This function is not limited to interpersonal communication alone but can also be applied across various communication contexts, including mass communication.

6. Socialization

The value of the socialization function serves as a means of self-formation while simultaneously introducing the cultural values of one society to another. In intercultural communication, nonverbal behaviors that are not fully understood frequently emerge. Therefore, the most essential skill is the ability to interpret the values embedded in body movements and symbolic expressions of the communicant, so that the intended meaning can be accurately understood.

7. Medium of Entertainment

Intercultural communication also functions as a medium of entertainment. Various programs presented through social media and electronic media are designed to entertain, for example by showcasing traditional dances combined with fresh humor. This form of entertainment can be categorized as intercultural entertainment because, in addition to providing enjoyment, it simultaneously introduces cultural richness to a broader audience. DeVito emphasizes that intercultural communication is guided by several important principles, including linguistic relativity, language as a reflection of culture, the reduction of uncertainty, self-awareness of cultural differences, and the influence of intercultural differences in initial interactions (DeVito, 2013).

8. The relativity of Language

The general notion that language influences thought and behavior has been widely articulated by linguistic anthropologists. Differences among languages are most apparent during the initial stages of interaction; therefore, the use of effective communication techniques becomes essential. Active listening and perception checking are particularly helpful in verifying the accuracy of understanding, while also providing opportunities to correct or refine inaccurate perceptions (DeVito, 2013). By communicating in a specific and clear manner, the likelihood of misunderstanding can be significantly reduced. The greater the cultural differences, the greater the differences in communication, both through language and nonverbal cues (Hall, 1959). Increasingly sharp intercultural differences may complicate the communication process, thereby increasing the potential for linguistic errors, misunderstandings, and misperceptions. Therefore, a high level of sensitivity to barriers that hinder meaningful intercultural communication is essential. In addition, the use of effective communication techniques is crucial in order to sustain intercultural interactions while simultaneously enhancing their quality.

According to Gudykunst and Langer, the greater the intercultural differences, the higher the level of mindfulness among communication participants. This condition carries both positive and negative consequences: on the one hand, increased mindfulness can enhance sensitivity to cultural differences and strengthen communication effectiveness; on the other hand, excessive mindfulness may lead to awkwardness, tension, or barriers in interaction. The better individuals know one another, the more their excessive cautiousness tends to decrease, allowing communication to become more confident and spontaneous. This condition ultimately enhances satisfaction in interaction. The main problem does not actually lie in how interaction is maintained or how mutual understanding is pursued, but rather in the tendency to give up too quickly when misunderstandings occur at the early stages of communication (Gudykunst, 1997).

According to Altman and Taylor, intercultural differences play a particularly important role during initial interactions; however, their significance gradually diminishes as relationships become more intimate. Although the possibility of misperception and misjudgment is always present in human interaction, this risk is especially high in intercultural communication contexts. Early judgments are typically based on very limited information; therefore, flexibility is required to revise

opinions formed under such constraints. Prejudice combined with high levels of uncertainty almost inevitably leads to inaccurate judgments, which must eventually be corrected through subsequent communication processes (Ajzen, 1991).

Intercultural communication plays a strategic role in fostering harmonious relationships within diverse societies. Personal functions, such as identity formation, social integration, knowledge enhancement, and problem solving, alongside social functions including surveillance, bridging, socialization, and entertainment, demonstrate that communication is not merely the exchange of messages but a process of meaning negotiation. The principles proposed by scholars underscore the importance of mindfulness, uncertainty reduction, and sensitivity to cultural differences to ensure that intercultural interactions remain effective, productive, and sustainable (Lilian et al., 2020). The greater the cultural differences, the greater the potential for communication difficulties. However, increased awareness and sensitivity can enhance communication effectiveness. Reducing uncertainty through interaction enables individuals to better predict, understand, and explain others' behavior, ultimately fostering more harmonious intercultural relationships.

Implications

This study has theoretical and practical implications for understanding intercultural communication in multicultural societies. Theoretically, integrating intercultural communication theory with Islamic da'wah highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity, adaptation, uncertainty reduction, and social solidarity in communication across cultural boundaries. Practically, the findings suggest that Islamic da'wah can be developed as an inclusive communication approach that respects cultural differences, promotes mutual understanding, and strengthens social harmony in plural societies such as Indonesia.

Research Contribution

This study contributes to the literature by integrating perspectives from intercultural communication, anthropology, and Islamic da'wah. In particular, it connects the concepts of assimilation, acculturation, adaptation, and social solidarity with Islamic da'wah as a form of intercultural communication. This integration provides a conceptual framework for understanding how da'wah can function as a bridge across cultural differences, reduce uncertainty, and support social integration in multicultural societies.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, it employs a theoretical analysis and library research approach without collecting empirical data from communities, da'wah practitioners, or communication participants. Therefore, the arguments presented are conceptual and cannot directly demonstrate the effectiveness of Islamic da'wah practices in specific multicultural settings. Second, the analysis primarily focuses on the Indonesian multicultural context, which may limit the applicability of the conceptual discussion to other cultural and religious contexts. Future studies should therefore complement this theoretical analysis with empirical evidence from diverse multicultural communities.

Suggestions

Future research should conduct empirical studies to examine how intercultural communication principles are applied in actual Islamic da'wah practices within multicultural communities. Quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approaches could be used to investigate the effectiveness of cultural adaptation, uncertainty reduction, and inclusive communication strategies in strengthening social integration and solidarity. Comparative studies across different ethnic, religious, and regional contexts are also recommended to further develop and validate the conceptual framework proposed in this study.

CONCLUSION

Intercultural communication in plural societies is inseparable from culture's role as a framework for shaping meaning, messages, and social interaction. Indonesia's ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity illustrates that communication is always influenced by cultural contexts. Intercultural communication not only facilitates information exchange but also serves as a medium for maintaining social harmony and strengthening solidarity. From an Islamic perspective, communication encompasses the broader dimension of da'wah, the call to invite humanity toward truth through wisdom and compassion. As a form of cross-cultural communication, da'wah requires sensitivity, skills, and an understanding of heterogeneous social structures. Integrating intercultural communication theory with Islamic da'wah demonstrates that communication can bridge differences, reduce uncertainty, and build stronger social bonds.

Theoretical discussions of assimilation, acculturation, adaptation, and social solidarity confirm that intercultural relations produce not only integration but also meaningful differences that enrich social life. Therefore, linking intercultural communication studies with Islamic da'wah contributes significantly to both theoretical development and practical applications, reaffirming that communication, culture, and da'wah are interconnected dimensions essential for fostering harmonious plural societies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their gratitude to their respective institutions for providing support and resources during the preparation of this study. The authors also thank the researchers and scholars whose works provided valuable theoretical foundations and references for this study. No specific funding was received for this research.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

HH contributed to the formulation of the main research ideas, the development of the conceptual framework and theoretical foundation, data collection and analysis, and the drafting of the initial manuscript. MAA contributed to the development of the methodology and theoretical arguments, conducted critical reviews of the manuscript, and was responsible for revising and refining the final version. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript for publication.

REFERENCES

- Abdulsalam, D. O. (2025). Revisiting Islamic Da'wah: Principles and the Prophetic Approach to Religious Communication. *Suhuf*, 37(2), 394–405. <https://doi.org/10.23917/suhuf.v37i2.12779>
- Adams, M. B., & Johnson, M. (2020). Acculturation, Pluralism, and Digital Social Advocacy in Nonprofit Strategic Communications. *The Journal of Public Interest Communications*, 4(2), 5. <https://doi.org/10.32473/jpic.v4.i2.p5>
- Ahmadi, M., & Gunarti, T. T. (2024). Pola Komunikasi Dakwah Inklusif Untuk Masyarakat Multikultural: Perspektif Manajemen Dakwah Modern. *Miyah Jurnal Studi Islam*, 20(2), 287–304. <https://doi.org/10.33754/miyah.v20i02.1339>
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-t](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-t)
- Al-Tarawneh, A. (2024). Exploring the Dynamics of Miscommunication between Arabic and English in Economic Discourse. *Studies in Media and Communication*, 12(3), 1. <https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v12i3.6916>
- Aleksandrova, O., Kolinko, M., Ішук, A. A., Kozlovets, M., Petryshyn, H., Hotsalyuk, A., & Taran, G. (2024). Understanding Intercultural Communication as a Condition for Sustainable Development. *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, 13(2), 261. <https://doi.org/10.14207/ejsd.2024.v13n2p261>
- Atran, S., Medin, D. L., & Roß, N. (2005). The Cultural Mind: Environmental Decision Making and

- Journal of Digital Scholarship in Archives and Information | 41

- <https://doi.org/10.21831/jc.v19i1.40371>
- Howarth, C. (2011). Representations, Identity, and Resistance in Communication. In *Palgrave Macmillan UK eBooks* (pp. 153–168). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230297616_8
- Huang, J., Dotterweich, E., & Bowers, A. (2012). Intercultural Miscommunication: Impact on ESOL Students and Implications for ESOL Teachers. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 39(1), 36–40. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ979006>
- Ilya, I., Mas'ula, M., Mainah, M., & Maskuri, M. (2026). Memahami Konsep Toleransi Beragama Dalam Keberagaman : Dari Moderasi Beragama Hingga Penguatan Sosial Di Masyarakat. *Community Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 6(1), 590–601. <https://doi.org/10.51878/community.v6i1.10058>
- Judaa, M. A., & Alshbeekat, A. (2024). A Contrastive Study of Persuasive Appeals in Online Advertising: Investigating Persuasive Appeals in Jordanian and Egyptian Telecommunication Advertisements During Ramadan. *English Language Teaching*, 17(8), 21. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v17n8p21>
- Kaplan, D., & Manners, R. A. (2000). *Teori budaya*. Pustaka Pelajar. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=pNY9OAAACAAJ>
- Kazanskaia, A. N., & Kazanskaia, A. N. (2025). *Inclusive Communication in Diverse Religious Communities: Principles, Practices, and Strategies*. <https://doi.org/10.64357/neya-gjnps-eng-dv-rl-cm-01>
- Kollai, I. (2023). Nations Beyond Interests. Emotional and Cognitive Motives in the Development of National Identities. *Journal of Nationalism Memory & Language Politics*, 17(1), 53–75. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jnmlp-2023-0003>
- Leonard, K. M., Scotter, J. R. Van, & Pakdil, F. (2009). Culture and Communication. *Administration & Society*, 41(7), 850–877. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399709344054>
- Liddicoat, A. J. (2009). Communication as Culturally Contexted Practice: A View from Intercultural Communication. *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 29(1), 115–133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07268600802516400>
- Lilian, I. N., Liadi, K. O., Yeboah, T. J., & Apelehin, A. A. (2020). Understanding Cross-Cultural Communication: Identity, Diversity, and Global Interaction. *Gyanshauryam International Scientific Refereed Research Journal*, 153. <https://doi.org/10.32628/gisrrj21352>
- Lull, J., & Neiva, E. (2011). Communicating Culture: An Evolutionary Explanation. *Comunicar*, 18(36), 25–34. <https://doi.org/10.3916/c36-2011-02-02>
- Lumampauw, A., Marta, R. F., Widyanto, Y. N., Sandel, T. L., & Lie, S. (2021). The art of honing the conscience through bukalapak ads: barongsai Indonesia, juara hati membangun bangsa. *International Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*, 3(1), 9–21. <https://doi.org/10.31763/viperarts.v3i1.342>
- Maesurah, S., Klau, S., Cangara, H., & Nurdiantara, R. R. (2025). Social Interaction and Religious Harmony: A Cultural Communication Study in Malaka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. In *BIOTIK: Scientific Journal of Biology Technology and Education (Indonesian Institute of Sciences)*. Indonesian Institute of Sciences. <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjkh.v9.i3.27167>
- Mahfudz, A. (1952). *Hidayah al-mursyidin ila thuruq al-wa'zh wa al-khithabah*. Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah. https://perpusawh.tebuieng.ac.id/index.php?p=show_detail&id=7446
- Menson, A., Aliman, B. D. S., Mamuca, P. S., Dalgan, B. K., Amil, B. P. M. A., Latip, F. A., Mamidted, A. D., Ulangkaya, Z. K., Unsi, A. L., Kasim, M., Abo, J. A., Amil, D. M. J. A., & Manalao, A. M. (2025). Bridging islamic and secular communication worlds: A comparative analysis of discourse norms and social structures. *Multidisciplinary Science Journal*, 8, 2026154. <https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2026154>
- Meydan, C. H., & Akkas, H. (2024). The Role of Triangulation in Qualitative Research. In *Advances in library and information science (ALIS) book series* (pp. 101–132). SAGE Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-3306-8.ch006>
- Mohiuddin, M., Aziz, M. T., & Jayashree, S. (2016). Multiculturalism and Interculturalism. In *Directory of Open Access Books (OAPEN Foundation)*. <https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9781474407083.001.0001>
- Mowlana, H. (2013). Communication and Cultural Settings: An Islamic Perspective. *Medical*

- Journal of Digital Scholarship in Archives and Information| 43